



November 30, 2011

Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is the voice of more than 400,000 people living with MS and their families throughout the United States and we are writing regarding ongoing efforts to expand internet access throughout the country, especially in rural and underserved areas.

Multiple sclerosis (MS), an unpredictable, often disabling disease of the central nervous system, interrupts the flow of information within the brain, and between the brain and body. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis. The progress, severity and specific symptoms of MS in any one person cannot yet be predicted, but advances in research and treatment are moving us closer to a world free of MS.

There is currently a shortage of neurologists in the United States and that shortage is even greater when looking for a neurologist who specializes in MS care. Telemedicine will become increasingly critical for patients in rural and underserved areas yet the lack of broadband internet access clearly hinders efforts to provide quality care for MS patients living in rural communities.

We commend the FCC on its recent announcement that many major cable companies are now offering some low-income households significantly reduced internet rates as another step to close the digital divide. We encourage all efforts to expand access and understand there are other proposals before the FCC that would provide lower cost services and expansion of broadband into more rural communities. While the National MS Society doesn't specifically endorse proposals before an agency such as the FCC, we do want to convey the importance of expanding internet access as one tool in the effort to expand quality health care in the United States and encourage the FCC to look favorably on proposals that help meet that goal.

On behalf of the National MS Society I want to thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing efforts to expand access to communications tools. Please



don't hesitate to contact our Vice President of Federal Government Relations, Ted Thompson at ted.thompson@nmss.org or (202) 408-1500, if we can provide additional information or be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Chatel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Chatel
Executive Vice President, Advocacy

cc: Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn